

SOME REMARKS ABOUT THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYMENT FIELD

In 1940, there were a little over 2,000,000 women in the field of household employment. In 1944, this number had dropped to one and one-half million. It is significant that in 1940, 17.7% of all employed women were in the field of household work, while in 1944, 9.5% of all employed women workers were household employees.

As far back as January of 1937, according to estimates of the USES, there were at least 500 cities that faced a shortage of trained household workers. On the other hand, in July of the same year, there were 400,000 applicants registered in the active files of the USES, who indicated their interest in household work.

In 1947, we still have an unhealthy condition in this field in terms of supply and demand. The two just don't get together. The Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor as a result of a recent survey and many years of work in the field of household employment, has made the following remarks about two extremely important items in terms of diagnosis of what the trouble is, in other words:

- (1) What kind of workers the employer wants and (2) What kind of job the household worker wants.

The employer wants a worker:

Who is skilled, intelligent, and reliable.

Who has and maintains a high standard of health.

Who can adapt herself to the conditions and needs of a particular home.

The Worker wants:

A job where hours are reasonable, and fair provision is made for time off and vacations; where, if she "lives in", food and lodging are adequate.

Where wages are comparable with other skilled occupations, and are raised as job performance improves.

Where opportunities for social life and companionship apart from the job are available.

Where duties are relatively standardized.

Where protection is offered in case of occupational illness.

Where employment relations are objective and professional.

In addition to specific objections or generalized objections of workers to household employment and generalized complaints of employers about household workers, there are some basic problems in the field of household employment that must be solved. These problems are quite a bit more important than objections of workers or complaints of employers and must be tackled first. For instance, wherever an attempt to bring about improvements in the household field have been made as we are attempting here in New Jersey to do, especially has showed certain similarities that make up the basic problem:

1. There are no accepted performance standards for household workers.
2. There are no generally accepted job classifications or titles.
3. That there is an erroneous idea that "anyone can do housework".
4. Training opportunities are very inadequate.
5. There are no standards with respect to hours, wages, working conditions, etc.
6. There is no legislative protection.